

1490. ee. 16.

THE
N U N N E R Y.
A N
E L E G Y.

In IMITATION of the
ELEGY in a CHURCH-YARD.

THE SECOND EDITION.

Son pittore anche io—

CORREGIO.



L O N D O N :

Printed for R. and J. DODSLEY, at Tully's-Head, Pall-Mall.

(Price Six-pence.)

[1763.]

Number

THE
UNIVERSITY
OF
YORK
LIBRARY

IN IMITATION OF
ELEGY IN A CHURCH-YARD.

THE SECOND EDITION



Printed for R. and J. Dobson, at 15, Pall Mall.
(Price 2s. 6d.)



T H E
N U N N E R Y.

Retirement's Hour proclaims the tolling Bell,
 Each sacred Virgin follows its Decree ;
 With meek Submission seeks her lonely Cell,
 And leaves the Grate to Solitude and me.

Now shows the sinking Sun a fainter glare
 And Silence thro' the Convent reigns confest,
 Save where some pale-ey'd Novice (wrap'd in Pray'r)
 Heaves a deep groan: and smites her guiltless breast.

Save where in artless melancholy Strains
 Some *Eloisa* whom soft Passion moves,
 Absorpt in Sorrow to the Night complains;
 For ever bar'd the *Abelard* she loves.

Within those ancient Walls by Moss o'erspread,
 Where the relenting Sinner learns to weep;
 Each in her narrow Bed till Mid-night laid,
 The gentle Daughters of Devotion sleep.

No Stings of Conscience goad their easy Breast,
 No unrepented Crimes their Slumbers fright,
 No mournful Dreams invade their peaceful Rest,
 Nor shrouded Spectres stalk afore their Sight!

Th' endearing Scenes of Life They all forego
 Ev'n Hymen's Torch for Them must never blaze,
 The Husband's fond Embrace They ne'er shall know,
 Nor view their Image in their Children's' Face.

Oft

Oft did they steal the flow'ry Robe of *May*
 To deck the Altar and the Shrines around :
 How fervent did They chant the pious Lay,
 While the deep Organ swell'd the sacred Sound ?

Let not the gay Coquette with Jest profane,
 Mock their veil'd Life and Destiny severe :
 Nor worldly Beauty with a Sneer disdain
 The humble Duties of the Cloyster'd Fair.

The glist'ning Eye : The half-seen Breast of Snow,
 The coral Lip, the clear vermilion Bloom
 Awaits alike th' inexorable Foe,
 The Paths of Pleasure lead but to the Tomb.

Forgive, Ye Fair, whom *Britain's* Sons admire,
 If This her meanest Bard incur your Blame,
 While He devotes not to your Praise the Lyre,
 But to the Convent dedicates his Theme.

Can These partake the sprightly-moving Dance?
 Or in the Garb of Luxury appear?
 Can These e'er pierce the Lover with a Glance?
 Or grace the Tragic Scene with Pity's Tear?

Perhaps in this drear Mansion are confin'd
 Some whose accomplish'd Beauty cou'd impart
 The soft Desire to the severest Mind,
 And wake to Extacy the throbbing Heart.

But splendid Life in each Allurement drest
 Attracts Them not, tho' flush'd with youthful Bloom;
 Stern Pennance chills the Ardour of their Breast,
 And buries their Ambition in this Gloom.

Full many a Riv'let steals its gentle Way
 Unheard, untasted, by the thirsty Swain,
 Full many a *Philomel* attunes her Lay,
 And pours her plaintive Melody in vain.

Some

Some veil'd *Eliza* (like the clouded Sun)
 May here reside inglorious and unknown;
 Some, like *Augusta*, might have rear'd a Son
 To bless a Nation and adorn a Throne.

From Flatt'ry's Lip to drink the Sweets of Praise,
 In Wit and Charms with other Belles to vie,
 In Circles to attract the partial Gaze
 And view Their Beauty in th' Admirer's Eye

Their Lot forbids: nor does alone remove
 The Thirst of Praise, but even their Vices chains;
 Forbids thro' Folly's Labyrinth to rove,
 And yield to Pleasure the unheeded reins:

To raise mid Hymen's Joys domestic Strife,
 Or seek that Converse which They ought to shun,
 To break the sacred Ties of married Life
 And give to many what they vow'd to one.

Far from the Bustle of the splendid Throng
 They tread Obscurity's sequester'd Vale,
 Where the white Hours glide silently along
 Smooth as the Stream, when sleeps the breezy Gale.

Yet tho' they're sprinkled with ethereal Dew?
 With blooming Wreaths by Hands of Seraphs crown'd?
 Tho' Heav'n's eternal Splendors burst to View?
 And Harps celestial to their Ear resound?

Still grateful Mem'ry paints the absent Friend,
 Not ev'n the World to their Remembrance dies:
 Their Mid-night Orisons to Heav'n ascend
 To stop the Bolt descending from the Skies:

For who entranc'd, in Visions from above
 The Thought of Kindred razes from the Mind?
 Feels in the Soul no warm returning Love
 For some endear'd Companion left behind?

From

From Friendship's Breast reluctant they withdrew,
And with a Sigh forsook their native Air:
To their fond Parents when they bad Adieu
Gush'd from their Eye the tender filial Tear.

For Thee, who mindful of th' encloyster'd Fair
Dost in these Lines their artless Tale relate,
If Chance in distant Time's revolving Year
Some kindred Spirit shall enquire thy Fate,

Haply some aged Vestal may reply,
" Oft have we seen Him 'ere *Aurora's* Ray
" Had faintly ting'd with red the op'ning Sky,
" Hasten to Church, and join the Matin Lay.

" There at the Tomb where *Eloisa* lies,
" He'd read th' Inscription: and her Fate condole,
" Then in his Breast, as Scenes of Grief arise,
" Sigh the kind Requiem to her gentle Soul.

" Against yon Pillar careless now He'd lean,
 " Smiling at what his wayward Fancy moves :
 " Now drooping, wan, and pensive, wou'd be seen
 " As one abandon'd by the Fair He loves.

" One Morn I miss'd Him in the awful Dome
 " Along the Isle, and in the Sacrify:
 " Another came, nor yet beside the Tomb,
 " Nor at the Font, nor in the Porch was He.

" The next we heard, which did our Wonder move,
 " He was departed to return no more,
 " Yet left the sudden Change we shou'd reprove,
 " These Lines He sent us from *Britannia's* Shore.

" What Time in Transport lost the Naiad Throng,
 " First catch'd their *Akenside's* enchanting Lay,
 " And raptur'd Fancy listen'd to the Song
 " Of laurel'd *Whitehead*, and sweet-plaintive *Gray*."

The

The LETTER.

*A Vestal Fair (Her Name I may'nt unfold)
 Has planted in my Breast the pleasing Dart;
 Who by relentless Vows, if not controll'd,
 Wou'd own, perchance, a Sympathy of Heart.*

*The growing Passion impotent to quell,
 Severe Discretion urg'd me to retreat;
 Now at my native rural Home I dwell,
 Where Contemplation keeps her lonely Seat.*

*Seek not to draw me from this still Abode,
 Where the kind Muses to my Aid repair,
 And when the Thoughts of hapless Love corrode,
 Check the deep Sigh, and wipe the trickling Tear.*

F I N I S.

The LETTER.

A Vernal Fair (Her Name I may not unfold)
Has planted in my Breast the pleasing Dart;

Woe by reluctant Force, if not contriv'd,
Woe's own Perchance, a Sympathy of Heart.



The governing Passion impels to quell,
Sovereign Discretion wags a doubtful Bell;
Never at my notice rung the solemn Bell,
Where Contemplation keeps her lonely Seat.

Seek not to drive me from this Hill of Aetna,
Where the kind Muses to my Aid repair,
And when the Thoughts of hapless Love converse,
Check the deep Sigh, and wipe the twinkling Tear.

